

ELIPESURUS SCHOMBURGK, 1843 (PISCES): PROPOSED
SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS. Z.N.(S.) 1825

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The genus *Elipesurus* Schomburgk, 1843 was established on a single species *Elipesurus spinicauda* Schomburgk, 1843, based on a figure in Schomburgk. This species therefore becomes the type-species by monotypy. The identity of the species has remained uncertain ever since.

2. In 1865 Dumeril redescribed the generic taxon under the name *Paratrygon* based again on a single nomen dubium, *Raja ajeriba* Walbaum, 1792 which is the type-species by monotypy.

3. In 1878 Garman established the generic name *Potamotrygon* for the same taxon with three species, *P. humboldti* (with *Trygon hystrix* Müller & Henle, 1841, in synonymy), *P. motoro* Müller & Henle, 1841, and *P. dumerilii* Castelnau 1855. He did not fix a type-species but Fowler cited *Trygon hystrix* Müller & Henle as the type in 1948. At the same time Garman established the family-group POTAMOTRYGONES in the TRYGONIDAE. Garman stated that *Elipesurus* (sic) *spinicauda* Schomburgk was probably a mutilated specimen of one of the varieties of *Potamotrygon dumerilii* Castelnau, 1855. There is no doubt that Garman used a new name *Potamotrygon* and ignored the available name *Paratrygon* Dumeril, 1865 because the latter was based on the nomen dubium *Raja ajereba* Walbaum.

4. In 1870 Günther emended the name *Elipesurus* to *Ellipesurus* and was followed by Ribeiro 1907 who placed the genus with *Dasyatis* Rafinesque, 1810 in the family DASYATIDAE.

5. In 1913 Garman changed his mind and adopted the name *Elipesurus* Schomburgk for *E. spinicauda* Schomburgk, with the words:

"Though it is a doubtful species, it is one that, like *Elipesurus stroglyopterus*, collectors may yet hope to secure."

Garman doubtfully included *Trygon stroglyopterus* Schomburgk, 1843 in the genus *Elipesurus* and raised his *Potamotrygon*es to family rank, POTAMOTRYGONIDAE on page 415.

6. In 1948 Fowler adopted the name *Elipesurus* Schomburgk with type-species *E. spinicauda* Schomburgk for *Trygon stroglyopterus* Schomburgk. *Elipesurus* Schomburgk cannot, therefore, be regarded as a nomen oblitum under Article 23b until 1998, even if it remains unused during that time (see Paragraph 4). Fowler rejected Garman's name *Potamotrygon* for the generic taxon and used the older name *Paratrygon* Dumeril, 1865. Since the type-species of *Paratrygon* by monotypy is *Raja ajereba* Walbaum and since this species is unidentifiable, Garman was probably right in regarding *Paratrygon* Dumeril as a nomen dubium and refusing to use it. Fowler also created the

family group name PARATRYGONIDAE which he used instead of Garman's POTAMOTRYGONIDAE. This also is a nomen dubium and should not be used at present*.

7. The present author in 1964 in a revision of the POTAMOTRYGONIDAE adopted the name *Elipesurus* for the doubtful *E. Spinicauda* but rejected Fowler's PARATRYGONIDAE and PARATRYGONINAE Gill cited by Fowler, and used Garman's name POTAMOTRYGONIDAE and his genus *Potamotrygon* with type-species *Trygon hystrix* Müller & Henle, 1841. He included 17 species in the genus *Potamotrygon*. Having carefully studied Schomburgk's figure and compared it with some 5,000 specimens, he has now come to the conclusion that Schomburgk had *Trygon brachyurus* Günther 1870 before him when figuring *Elipesurus spinicauda*. *Elipesurus* thus becomes a senior synonym of *Potamotrygon* Garman and by the law of priority should replace it.

8. In order to maintain uniformity and to avoid confusion, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is requested to:

- (1) use its plenary powers to suppress for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy:
 - (a) the generic name *Elipesurus* Schomburgk, 1843;
 - (b) the specific name *spinicauda* Schomburgk, 1843, as published in the binomen *Elipesurus spinicauda*;
- (2) place the generic name *Potamotrygon* Garman, 1878 (gender: neuter), type-species, by designation by Fowler, 1948, *Trygon hystrix* Müller & Henle, 1841, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;
- (3) place the specific name *hystrix* Müller & Henle, 1841, as published in the binomen *Trygon hystrix* (type-species of *Potamotrygon* Garman, 1878) on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (4) place the following generic names on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *Elipesurus* Schomburgk, 1843 (as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above);
 - (b) *Ellipesurus* Günther, 1870 (an unjustified emendation of *Elipesurus* Schomburgk, 1843);
- (5) place the specific name *spinicauda* Schomburgk, 1843, as published in the binomen *Elipesurus spinicauda* (as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above) on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology;
- (6) place the family name POTAMOTRYGONIDAE Garman, 1878 (type-genus *Potamotrygon* Garman, 1878) on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology.

*It is unwise to suppress nomina dubia under the plenary powers of the International Commission since such names do not threaten any current name. If and when they are identified then it is time enough for the zoologist who identifies the species to apply for its suppression if it threatens some well used name. See *Bull. zool. Nomenclature* 22 : 265, 1965. W. E. China.

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